

# NHDAZ

## Teacher Manual - The Basics



**Arizona History Day is organized by  
Arizona Historical Society**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **What is National History Day?**

National History Day is a project based learning opportunity that also hosts an optional contest that allows students to express and explore their passions in history. It fosters growth in historical research, literacy, and creative expression that aligns to state standards that are taught at their grade levels.

Students begin by learning how to select an area of learning that has primary sources, research topics, learn about the annual national theme, then researching and asking questions that align to their interests.

Then begins the heavy lifting of work for the student. The student will conduct historical research and analysis of primary and secondary sources, which they will present in the form of an exhibit, documentary, paper, performance, or develop a website. After completion of the project the student may compete at one of the regional competitions. If selected, may participate at the state level competition. There is also a national competition NHD in June. Also available, potential scholarships and awards.

## **What is NHDAZ?**

NHDAZ is the state affiliate of National History Day and is sponsored by the Arizona Historical Society (AHS). Throughout the year, the AHS education department works with teachers, students, librarians, and local historical institutions to support implementation of the program in the classroom.

Arizona is divided into regions that hold the regional contests in the spring. In April, qualifying students compete in the state contest in Phoenix.

## **What does NHD do nationally?**

1. NHD holds an annual contest for students in grades 6-12. Often states will begin with 4th and 5th graders to give them the experience and prepare them for competition when they reach 6th grade. NHD reaches over 600,000 students at the regional level, over 30,000 teachers participate nationally and contests are held across 56 affiliated states, and territories.
2. NHD seeks to improve history education through their program offering curriculum assistance to schools, professional development support to teachers, and the opportunity for participation in national forums.
3. NHD has been proven to be beneficial to students and have found through surveys and studies that students who participate in NHD are better writers who can communicate evidence based research and provide a solid point of view. Students can become critical thinkers by learning to analyze and synthesize information and the project based format develops college readiness skills.

## **NHD Project Basics**

This program encourages students to investigate a topic in history and create a project based on an annual theme chosen by NHD. Throughout the process, student choice should be encouraged as much as possible. Here are the basics of a NHD project for teachers if they want to implement it in their classroom.

1. Introduction of the NHD program and how it relates to your classroom, following your state standards, and expectations. Explain to your students that the NHD process will give them an opportunity to apply skills and knowledge that they will be learning this year by self selecting a topic to align to the theme given by NHD.

2. Your students will select a topic that compliments the theme. You as the teacher may set parameters to support your standards, but encourage your students to select a topic that they can commit to as the project takes most of the school year. A good topic needs to be the right size. Not too broad where the thesis statement is difficult to craft like WWII or too narrow where their research or the historical significance can't be found such as a single battle that occurred during WWII. Steering students to use their local resources of Arizona can help them find rich, quality primary sources to help them with their project. The student's job is to develop a strong argument as to the importance of their topic in history is crucial. Work to recommend topics that focus on events at least 20 years in the past, providing enough time for historical relevance to be clear. This is not to say that they can't tie a current event to their argument.
3. Researching the chosen topic is the foundation of the history day project. Students will spend the majority of the project's length researching a topic in order to complete a quality, thorough, unbiased investigation of the topic. Emphasis should be on learning what a primary source is and using them for the project. There is no set number of sources students must have for a quality project. But knowing the difference between primary and secondary sources is vital to their success. Students will be asked to gather, analyze, and present relevant information on their topic.
4. Once the student has researched using primary and secondary sources and has an understanding of the basic narrative of their topic, they will begin to develop their historical argument, or thesis statement. The thesis statement describes the significance of their topic in history. In this step of the process, students will also look

- at historical context, understanding how their topic is connected to larger issues in history at that time.
5. Students will then show what they know about their topic by creating and presenting their information. Students will assemble their findings into one of the 5 project categories (described in greater detail later). In addition to category specific requirements, every student will create a process paper and annotated bibliography. Once their projects are complete, students should be given the opportunity to present their work to an audience. This can be through the contest structure of NHD or simply a classroom presentation to their fellow students. This last step allows students to feel proud of their work, can be offered feedback, reflect and think more critically and deeply about their topic when answering questions. As the teacher you have the flexibility to choose how you want to participate and to what level of competition.

### **Annual Theme**

To keep the program challenging and engaging to be used year to year, NHD develops an annual theme. The themes are broad enough to facilitate wide variety in topic selection-from local to national to international history, but narrow enough to enable focus. Themes may be repeated, but never within a seven year time span. Meaning if a sixth grader participates every year they will see a different theme each year. For more information about this year's theme, please visit [www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org)

### **How does this help teachers?**

Focusing on standards through project based learning is research based learning allows for deeper engagement and interaction with learning. Teaching your students how a historian thinks is a way to encourage higher order thinking skills and gaining a sense of mastery and self-efficacy.

How do historians think? Analytically. Critically. Broadly. By the time your students complete their NHD projects they should be able to check off these learning targets.

- \_\_\_ I can pose research questions about a topic in history.
- \_\_\_ I can gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to my research question.
- \_\_\_ I can analyze primary and secondary sources for credibility and bias.
- \_\_\_ I can suggest possible answers to my research questions.
- \_\_\_ I can write a thesis statement related to the NHD theme, taking a position on my topic and supporting it with evidence.
- \_\_\_ I can organize primary and secondary sources in a format that tells a historical narrative.
- \_\_\_ I can organize primary and secondary sources that prove my thesis statement.
- \_\_\_ I can draw conclusions from my research findings and explain the impact my topic has on history.
- \_\_\_ I can present and cite sources in an annotated bibliography.
- \_\_\_ I can compose a process paper that explains how I selected my topic and conducted my research.
- \_\_\_ I can show what I have learned through a variety of projects that are self selected.

### **Student Skills/Teacher Lessons**

Throughout the process students develop and practice skills that are important to meet academic and social needs. Here are some skills to consider teaching to support their work.

Topic Selection- Socratic Seminar, Thinking in historical eras, understanding the different areas of history (SPRITE-Social, Political, Religious, Intellectual, Technological, Economic).

Research-note taking, developing research questions, online and library research, verifying source integrity, plagiarism, primary vs. secondary sources, how to read a primary source, reading maps, reading images/cartoons.

Analysis-writing thesis statements, understanding historical context.

Presentation-writing in 5 paragraphs, project organization and planning, project development, writing a process paper, completing an annotated bibliography. Interview skills, advocating for themselves.

## **Models of History Day Participation - How to Implement**

**Social Studies/ History Classroom Assignment** -History Day is assigned as a major project for a quarter or semester. The assignment may apply to an entire grade level or select classes. The project may culminate in a school history project fair with a number of students that advance to a regional contest.

\*Projects usually account for 25% to 50% of overall grade for that quarter or semester due to the time and scope of the project.

\*Students that advance to an official History Day regional or state competition could receive extra credit for revising their entries at each competition.

\*Good timeline would include a minimum of 10 weeks to complete the assignment. For schools that intend to participate in the competitive cycle, projects usually must be completed by the end of January to give time to prepare for a regional competition. Regional competitions begin in February and March. State is in April. If a student chooses to compete at Nationals that is held in June.

### **Interdisciplinary Assignment (ELA/SS)**

Partnering the project could benefit and meet standards for both English Language Arts and Social Studies. Teachers collaborate to build upon learner outcomes required for a History Day project. ELA focuses on research and writing skills while social studies students teachers use their time to work with students to select topics, research/analysis, project development and time management. Students could share grades in both classes so working and earning credit in both subjects. Culminating event to present projects and receive feedback from peers and teacher evaluation.

### **Extracurricular/Club Opportunities**

Focus on those students that are interested in history. This would require a sponsoring teacher to work with the AHS education staff to support the project. Could be a local celebration/contest or submit to competitive regional opportunities.

## **NHD COMPETITION BASICS**

Your class or school can participate in NHD history day at whatever level you are comfortable with the support of AHS education staff to help guide, provide resources, training opportunities, information, etc...

Keep in mind, entering into the contest aspect of NHD is NOT required. You may use the general structure of NHD with your students in any way that you feel works best for your students and situation.

*The following standards ONLY apply to projects when entering it into a NHD contest.*



NHDAZ follows the NHD project and contest rules. You can find NHD official information at

<https://www.nhd.org/how-enter-contest>

**Rules** - *NHD Contest Rule Book* is a student's guide to creating an entry project and preparing for judging of the project. There are specific rules for each type of entry, such as the requirements of an annotated bibliography and process paper. It also covers the category specific rules with detailed explanations and expectations including size limit for exhibits, time limits for documentaries and performances, etc...

Every student that wants to participate in a contest should be given access to the rule book. There is a free download at [www.nhd.org](http://www.nhd.org) The student may refer directly to the Rule Book when they have questions. Encourage them to advocate and seek answers through this process. If the student has reviewed the rule book and there are still questions you may contact AHS education staff to support you in directing the student. We will work with the NHD executive director who is the final arbiter of all rules.

### **Divisions and Categories**

For purposes of fairness and greater participation, student entries are divided into age divisions: **Elementary**, grades 4-5; **Junior**, grades 6-8; **Senior**, grades 9-12.

NOTE-Elementary Division students are not eligible to compete at the National Contest.

Within each division, there are five categories of projects that students can create: **Paper, Performance, Documentary, Exhibit** and **Website**.

Except for **Papers**, students can enter individually or as a group of up to five.

Individual and Group Projects compete separately in every division.

Adding together the divisions and categories, there are 20 total categories for competition. Nine each in the **Junior and Senior Divisions** and two in the **Elementary Division**. Each category requires different skill sets designed to appeal to student interest and abilities. Project work is more enjoyable when one can build upon existing knowledge and skills.

### **NHDAZ Project Categories**

For each category (except Paper), students may work individually or in a group of up to five students.

**Paper**-(Individual only; no group work allowed)

Historical research paper between 1,500-2,500 words

**Exhibit**-Three dimensional visual representation of a topic, similar to a poster board display.

**Performance**-Dramatic portrayal of a topic.

**Documentary**-Audio/Visual representation of your topic

### **Elements that should be included on all project categories:**

Title page-Project title, division and category, student name(s), word counts

Process paper-Answer the following questions in your paper.  
How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the

annual theme? How did you conduct your research? How did you create your project? What is your historical argument? In what ways is your topic significant in history?

Annotated Bibliography-List all sources consulted. Citations follow either Chicago or MLA format (Chicago preferred). 1-3 sentences explaining how and why students used each source.

\*Elementary Division do NOT need to annotate their bibliographies.

**Competition Levels** - In Arizona you may participate in three levels of competition.

**Regional Contests**-Arizona is divided into regions. The Arizona Historical Society hosts the regional competitions in the North-Flagstaff, South-Tucson, East and West are held in Phoenix. Any questions as to what region you would participate in please contact AHS Education staff at 520 617-1154 or email [nhdaz@azhs.gov](mailto:nhdaz@azhs.gov) to ask any questions.

**National History Day AZ** - The state contest is hosted in Phoenix in April.

Students who win 1st or 2nd place at this contest are eligible to participate at the national competition. 3rd place winners at the state contest serve as alternates in case the top finishers are unable to attend.

# **SAMPLE TIMELINE AND TIPS FOR CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION**

**These can be changed to fit best with your classroom**

## **Week 1-2**

### *Introduction to National History Day*

1. Explain what NHD is, the theme, and what your expectations will be for your students completing the project.
2. Introduce the concept of thesis statements, primary and secondary sources, and annotated bibliographies.
  - a. Lessons should be taught before and reintroduced as necessary. Teacher resources and professional development is available at [www.nhg.org](http://www.nhg.org)
  - b. AHS can provide support in archives, research opportunities, lessons, and examples upon request. [nhdaz@azhs.org](mailto:nhdaz@azhs.org)
3. Introduce sample topics—you as the teacher can develop topics from the content that you intend to teach through the semester or year. You can have students pick five things that they think they would like to research and learn more about. Then practice looking at primary sources to show the importance of having enough evidence to research and develop an argument.

*If your students focus on Arizona topics, or topics that have historical relevance in Arizona during that time period we at the museums have access to many primary sources. EX: WWII Japanese Internment Camps-Arizona had several and we have many primary resources in our library and archives.*

4. Topic selection activity—have students brainstorm and develop up to five areas that they are interested in learning more about.

### **WEEK 2-3**

#### *Article analysis/Preliminary topics chosen*

1. Have students determine their broad topic of interest and choose and read two articles/chapters from a primary source related to it.
2. From these sources their response to the sources should identify and describe the author's thesis, evaluate their use of evidence (i.e. what statistics, examples, data support their thesis), and explain if the author was successful or not.
3. They should be able to address how the article/chapter helps them with their research.

### **WEEK 3-4**

#### *Primary Source Analysis*

1. Introduce your students to places to find primary sources: public and university libraries, Arizona Historical Museum Library and Archives, the National Archives has NHD resources. (ADD links here)
2. Have students find at least two primary sources related to their preliminary research topic.
3. Students should read, analyze the sources and write an annotation for them.
4. Have students address: the type of source, its subject, bias of the author, and how it supports their research.

### **WEEK 4-5**

#### *Article/Source Analysis*

1. Students should find two or more primary and secondary sources related to their topic.
2. Narrow their topic focus.
3. Have them submit annotations for each source to help monitor their progress and support them at the end.

### **WEEK 5-6**

#### *Final Topic and Initial Thesis*

1. Students should have a narrowed focus from their initial broad topic.

2. Develop and submit a provisional thesis statement.
3. Students should submit for your review a revised annotated bibliography for the eight or more sources they have up to this point.

### **WEEK 6-7**

#### *Revised Thesis/Article Analysis*

1. Students submit annotations for two more primary and secondary sources each.
2. Work with students to revise thesis statements.

### **WEEK 7-8**

#### *Outline*

1. Thesis statement
2. Main supporting points with topic sentences.
3. Should include which primary source will be their evidence.
4. Work on annotated bibliography.

### **WEEK 9-10**

#### *Rough Draft of Paper*

1. Students write a 5-7 page paper that has a thesis, three to five supporting points, conclusion, and annotated bibliography.
2. This paper will provide the text for whatever project they choose.

### **WEEK 10-11**

#### *Final Draft of Paper*

If competing at regional competition:

Determine project type - January

Work on project - January/February

Regional competitions begin late February and March

## **TIPS for Developing your Class Calendar for implementation**

Start with a calendar and introduce the 1st day of school and end with the NHD National Contest in June (Go big or go home! You never know what your students will do!)

Be sure to consider the following when developing your class calendar.

1. Time for students to share at school their projects with their peers, teachers and administration. You may stop here and that if OK. This is an opportunity for learning first.
2. Calendar regional contest. Dates on AHS website ([LINK here](#))
3. National History Day Arizona-April
4. Your school's fall/winter/spring breaks, holidays, state testing weeks and any other days that will limit your student's work.
5. Official kickoff day for the NHD project with your classes.
6. Calendar when your students will propose topics to you. Need time in case you need to regroup or help with another topic.
7. Reserve time in library/computer lab/media center.
8. Any field trips or help needed by AHS education staff. Email and get dates set if we can help with any part of the process.
9. Deadlines for when students need to submit research/annotated bibliography phases to you. You will need time to review and grade.
10. Deadlines for evidence of their research.
11. Deadlines for submitting pieces of their project. Allow for teacher/peer feedback.
12. When all final projects are due.

## **‘GOTTA DO’ for History Day Success!**

1. Connect with AHS Education staff to help you throughout the process. Make sure to let them know that you are participating.
2. Build a support network. AHS Education staff will send out monthly updates, opportunities for support, videos for you or your students to help. At your school reach out to English teachers to help with aspects of thesis statements or annotated bibliography. Connect with your librarian or media specialist to support the research process. Local library for additional resources and support.
3. Email us to set time to talk through any portion of the project.
4. Keep parents informed. This is a long project with potentially a lot of points toward a student’s grade. No surprises on deadlines.
5. Divide the project into small manageable chunks. Mini-lessons, practice, then assign something. Samples are great-*I DO, We DO, YOU DO*.
6. Don’t rush, students may get excited and motivated but there are important steps along the way that can’t be skipped. Allow them time to first understand the project, explore topics, conduct preliminary research, consider how it fits into the NHD theme, write annotated bibliography along the process so they aren’t scrambling at the end.
7. Focus on the skills that you will need to build. Gotta walk before you can run. Scaffold important lessons that will support your project. Before you introduce the project, determine what skills they already have, what skills they will need, and develop a plan on how to teach them in manageable chunks. Need help on lessons on primary and secondary sources? Contact us!



8. You don't have to be an expert on every topic that your student's are researching. Your strength is that you don't need to be the content expert, they need to become the content expert. You guide them, reteach the concepts if necessary.
9. Know ahead of time that each student will get various levels out of this project. The ultimate goal is the academic growth of your students. Not all students will go to the National contest. Maybe none of your kids will even compete. Help them understand that this is an opportunity for project based learning where they will get the standards that you need to teach but with the flexibility of them finding a topic they want to pursue.
10. YOU ARE THE BOSS! Adapt National History Day project to fit your needs. You have the ability to adapt the program to suit specific needs, like limiting group size, category option (maybe the first year paper or exhibit only), topic choice to align to what you are teaching in your class.
11. Over communicate with your parents.
  - a. Give the outline of National History Day and the project you propose for the school year. Maybe a kick off at Open House? Let them know the project is worth the work because it meets state standards, gives them valuable college and career skills. If you let your students select their topics it empowers them and motivates their learning. Sure, it's going to be work, but worthwhile as it was their idea.
12. If you are considering participating in regional competitions, please do yourself a favor and provide parents with as much information as possible. Direct them to the NHD Contest Rule Book:  
<https://www.nhd.org/how-enter-contest>
13. Provide them access to NHD evaluation sheets. Both they and their student can see what they will be scored on and

help them determine what needs to be included.

<https://www.nhd.org/categories>. These forms can also be used by you as a teacher for classroom level assessment.

Each NHD evaluation has two sections:

***Historical Quality (80%)*** This section focuses on the strength of historical argument, research, and relationship to the theme and is the same for all categories.

***Clarity of Presentation (20%)*** This section evaluates how well a project communicates an argument using the tools of a specific category and is different for each category.

The benefits of the evaluation process is Judges' evaluations are part of the learning process of NHD. Judges' evaluations identify areas for improvement and provide feedback. The Judges' comments also can provide students with ideas for revisions and enhancements as they move from one contest level to the next.

Our judges and historians, educators, museum staff and others that are interested in history and education.

## **HOW DOES THE EVALUATION PROCESS WORK?**

At official NHD contests, each NHD division and category is judged by a separate panel of judges. After the judges review a student's project, they then conduct a brief (5-10 minute) interview with the student to ask any follow up questions. A student's interview skills are not officially judged. Instead, the interview provides an opportunity for the student to explain their historical thinking process and more clearly add their voice to the project.

NHDAZ History Day happens in one day so time constraints exist. If there are a number of entries there may be a first round and a final round. In such cases, the entries judged best by each team of initial judges are re-evaluated by a new team of judges to determine the winning entries in the category. The number of entries in finals and procedures for judging vary by contest.

Judges will not assign a numerical score to each entry; rather, they will rank the entries in their group. Judges are required to consult with each other in determining individual rankings. Judges are allowed to review the results of their category upon completion of the judging to ensure accuracy in the evaluation process. As a final step, the judges will assign each entry an overall rating.

Remember, judges must evaluate certain aspects of an entry that are objective (i.e. were primary sources used; spelling and grammar). However, judges also evaluate interpretive aspects of an entry that are qualitative in nature (i.e. Analysis and conclusions about the historical data). Historians often reach different opinions about the significance of the same data. It is therefore crucial for students to base their interpretations and conclusions on solid research. Judges will check to determine whether students used available primary sources and if they were careful to examine all sides of an issue and present a balanced account of the research. The process paper and annotated bibliography are critical to the process.

**THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL.** All parties taking part in a NHD contest must realize that inadvertent inequities may occur in judging and the contest officials do

want to be informed of any problem to avoid them in the future. However, the decision of the judges is final.

Thank you for your consideration of participating in NHDAZ. If you have any questions, comments or ideas we want to hear from you. Emails can be directed to us at [nhdaz@azhs.org](mailto:nhdaz@azhs.org) or contact us:

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